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GERMAN ESSAYS
ON SOCIALISM
IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

Theory, History, and
Political Organization, 1844–1914

Edited by Frank Mecklenburg
and Manfred Stassen

Introduction by Manfred Stassen

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Introduction

"A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of anti-Communism!"

(New York Times, Fall 1989)

At the very moment when the American bourgeois press, with unmitigated *Schadenfreude*, can easily score a point with its readers by turning the meaning of the first sentence of "The Communist Manifesto" of 1848 into its opposite, we propose that the American student of intellectual history, European affairs, and German studies have a closer look at an important chapter of the political and philosophical heritage of Western civilization—at the development of socialism in nineteenth-century Germany. We do so because we believe that, at the time of the demise of a system in Eastern Europe that traces its roots back to Marx and Engels, it is both intellectually honest and helpful to avoid misunderstandings, to go back to these roots and try to assess the original impetus of the socialist movement, its struggles, victories and defeats, its deviations from the original path, its divergent theoretical solutions, and political incarnations.

German socialism in the nineteenth century was, by no means, a unified movement: on the contrary, up until World War I, it was split into a number of internally feuding factions, even though it was perceived, from the outside, and for propagandistic purposes, as a monolithic, deadly threat to the ruling bourgeoisie.

The fight between the largest of these factions that has lasted for some seventy years, was eventually won by the so-called "revisionists." Recent developments in the socialist camp refer back to the debate on "revisionism," which is documented in this book. But up until 1917/18, Social Democracy was the organizational manifestation of the socialist movement as a whole comprising all of the

August Bebel

Anti-Semitism and Social Democracy

Anti-Semitism springs from the dissatisfaction of certain sections within the middle class that find themselves burdened by the development of capitalism and who are doomed to ruin partly due to this development. Misunderstanding, however, the true causes of their situation, they do not aim their fight against the capitalist economic system, but against a common phenomenon within the same system, which becomes a nuisance to them in the trade competition: against the Jewish exploiter.

With this origin, anti-Semitism is forced to make demands that are contradictory to both the economic as well as the political laws governing bourgeois society, hence they are antiprogressive. This is also the reason why anti-Semitism is predominantly supported by the Junkers and the clergy.

Anti-Semitism's one-sided fight against the Jewish exploiters must necessarily be a failure therefore, since the exploitation of men by men is not a specifically Jewish way of making a livelihood, but an intrinsic element pertaining to bourgeois society, which will not come to an end until bourgeois society declines.

As social democracy is the most determined enemy of capitalism, no matter whether its exponents are Jews or Christians, and as it aims at eliminating bourgeois society by bringing about its transformation into a socialist society, which will put an end to all oppression of men by men and all exploitation of men by men, social democracy is opposed to wasting its energies fighting against the existing political and social order by initiating an illegitimate and hence ineffectual fight against a phenomenon that is totally interrelated with bourgeois society.

Social democracy fights against anti-Semitism as a movement opposed to the natural evolution of society, which, however, ultimately will have a revolutionary effect despite its reactionary nature and against its own will, because the petite bourgeoisie and the small farmers, incited by anti-Semitism, are to realize that not only the Jewish capitalist, but the capitalist class at large is their enemy and that only the establishment of socialism will end their misery.

When the executive committee of the party put the issue of "Anti-Semitism and Social Democracy" on the agenda of the party convention in Berlin last year, it was particularly the anti-Semitic press that took note of this with satisfaction; pointing out that officially debating this question at our party convention proved how much significance anti-Semitism had attained in Germany. Certainly the anti-Semitic movement in Germany had to gain a certain weight first, before we would decide to take a position on it; but they are wrong in believing—and today's discussion will hopefully prove it—that this happens because we attribute any particular importance to these gentlemen. Concerning this question we only did what we have to do as a party vis-à-vis newly arising phenomena, which gained a certain significance in the sociopolitical and economic sectors. Our party in particular, more than any other, has always been trying not to close its eyes to such phenomena, but rather made a point of closely examining them as to their value and their impact.

Speaking of anti-Semitism as a new phenomenon is both correct and incorrect. Anti-Semitism, in terms of hostility against the Jews aiming at their extermination or at least their expulsion, is more than one and a half thousand years old. However, what we mean by anti-Semitism and an anti-Semitic party today is a new phenomenon insofar as the hostile endeavors aimed against Jewry have been united in a single political party that participates in public life. In addition, there is still some uncertainty as to this movement's significance among our own ranks. A few days before the party convention, I gave a lecture in Berlin concerning this present party convention and I also dealt briefly with this issue. Then a comrade said that far too much importance was attributed to this matter and anti-Semitism was nothing but the product of slogans. The applause from parts of this very well attended meeting that ensued from this statement showed me that a not unconsiderable segment of our comrades does not see clearly what this question is about. If anti-Semitism were only the result of empty phrases, we would not have

to deal with it here now. Discarding anti-Semitism in such a way is tantamount to the ways our opponents have been trying to discard us for the longest time. There, too, it was said that social democracy was merely the outcome of some people's agitation, whose disappearance or silencing would make social democracy disappear from the scene. Through the enormous growth of our movement and on account of other experiences, all of our fiercest enemies realized that this point of view was totally wrong. It is impossible to ignore phenomena that gain popularity with the masses; instead, one has to examine their causes and once the causes of the phenomena have been found, means will have to be sought how to cure the evil that created the phenomena.

Concerning the latter issue, we take a stand against the anti-Semitic movement different from other phenomena. We are in a position to declare that the evils that created anti-Semitism will disappear, but not through anti-Semitism's victory, rather through making the evils, and together with the evils making anti-Semitism itself obsolete, and causing both to disappear.

Anti-Semitism, understood in terms of hatred against the Jews, is a very old phenomenon. From the moment the old Jewish empire was destroyed, Jerusalem demolished and the Jewish population dispersed and scattered all over the countries of the ancient civilized world, certain anti-Semitic tendencies developed. Already Tacitus in his *Annals* speaks of the Jews in a hostile way. Until their expulsion, the Jews used to be a mostly agrarian and trading nation in their home country; unlike their ethnic kin, the Phoenicians, Tyrians, and Carthaginians, the Jews did not play a prominent role as traders in the ancient civilized world, primarily because their country was not located near the sea. It is characteristic, however, that immediately after their dispersion and scattering, most of them turned to trading. On the other hand, they could not assimilate as workers into a social order based on slave labor—as was characteristic of most countries of the ancient civilized world—as they were outside these societies. Consequently, trade was the only possible occupation, for which, in addition, the Semitic race undoubtedly always had a great natural inclination. For this reason Jews have been engaging in trade to this very day in places where they live as a small minority; in places, however, where they live together in masses, as in Hungary, Poland, Galicia, in parts of Russia, the majority of them turned to crafts or even to agriculture, mainly, because they were forced to, since not

everybody can engage in trading, which is why only a small number of them are involved in trade. There, the masses of working Jews get exploited by Jewish capitalists and entrepreneurs in an equally shameless way as the Christian workers in Christian Europe get exploited by Christian and Jewish exploiters. Only where Jews live rather in isolation, as it is the case in Germany, where there are 50 million inhabitants to roughly 500,000 Jews, their main occupation is trade. This development has been highly favored by circumstance for almost the past two thousand years. With the exception of the golden age in the Islamic-Arabic Empire, the Jews have been deliberately excluded from any other occupation by legislation, until most recent times. As we all know, Judaea was the cradle of Christianity; very early, however, Christianity adopted a hostile attitude against Judaism. On the other hand, Jews were bitterly opposed to the Christians, as some of the first Christians had been Jews and the Jews regarded them as black sheep, as apostates of their faith, and persecuted them. In addition, taking into account the representation by the Christian church of Christ's tribulations and his death on the cross, caused by the Jews, it becomes clear that this religious element prevailing among the masses from the Middle Ages until today, necessarily increased, at least to a considerable degree, if not generated, anti-Semitism. Furthermore, a general dislike against one another is to be found among people of different races, particularly with people of a lower cultural level. There is definitely a difference of race between the Jews and the rest of the population. After all, we realize how deeply ingrained national chauvinism—which the bourgeoisie keeps stirring up—is even today, and being milder than racial hatred, it becomes all the more clearly understood why racial hatred exists. We are, in fact, dealing with two races, who are completely different in terms of character and their entire nature, whose basic differences have been maintained throughout a period of two thousand years until today. Should a Jew living in a foreign nation be unlucky enough to be conspicuous by his appearance, so that one can already tell by his nose that he is a Jew, being, in the negative sense of the word, a marked one, racial antagonism will be fostered even more.

With seeming rightfulness the anti-Semites rebuke the Jews for being a race particularly hostile to the Germans, with specially unpleasant racial characteristics, because they would otherwise not have been able to maintain their separation from Christian Ger-

manic society for more than two thousand years. In this connection they ignore, however, that Jews have been forced until most recent times to live in separation from the rest of the population, unless they gave up their faith. Throughout the Middle Ages legislation, however changing in detail, was in its entirety thoroughly hostile against Jews, oppressing them and almost forcing them into isolation. And this persisting pressure for more than a thousand years was extremely conducive to the close ties among them. From the very beginning it was the legislation of the Middle Ages that greatly sinned against the Jews, thus promoting phenomena against the will of the legislators, which, in my opinion, looking at it objectively, the Jews are often wrongly accused of. In addition, the most rigorous and brutal pogroms against the Jews occurred, in the period between 1198 and 1331, no fewer than fifty-two of vast dimension. All major cities of Germany without exception were involved in these pogroms in those times, such as Cologne, Mayence, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Frankfurt am Main and so on and so forth. And they were not the kind of persecutions we came to know under the state of emergency against us. The Jews were chased from their house and home, robbed, cruelly mistreated and more often than not murdered, because of their faith, their race, and mainly because of their wealth. In some of these pogroms the number of victims totaled ten thousand. I confess that I cannot refrain from a certain admiration for a race that, despite all of these terrible persecutions has been developing in its own way and maintained its autonomy; a phenomenon that only manifested itself in one other people in history, the gypsies.

While this demagoguery and these acts of violence often took place with the approval and the support of the religious and secular authorities, the secular authorities, on the other hand, were inclined to grant the Jews certain privileges. As they did not belong to any German tribe, the Jews were under the protection of the emperor and ranked as the "Holy Roman Empire's chamberlains" and as such they were obliged to pay a certain annual "protection tax" known as the Jewish protection tax. Several emperors permitted the Jews to take twice the interest rate on the money they had lent out, as was normally permissible according to the existing laws, in order to be able to increase the protection tax. Usury, that is, the taking of interest, was originally looked down upon by the Catholic church in general and was considered un-Christian. As soon as capital started

accumulating, however, the prohibition of taking interest was unfeasible. And when the church itself started acquiring capital and real estate and began leasing the latter, that is, when it started practicing usury itself, its own vested interest was turned against the prohibition of taking interest. From then on maximum tariffs for the taking of interest were introduced—in other words, restrictions on interest rates as they existed until most recent times and in ways that the anti-Semites would like to see reestablished. With the increase of the interest rates the Jews were allowed to take, the amount of protection tax payable to the emperors increased. Thus the latter favored the Jews' usury for their own benefit. Throughout the Middle Ages the position of Jews in Germany was circumscribed by the following main restrictions: they were prohibited from acquiring or owning real estate; they were not allowed to be craftsmen; they were declared incapable of exercising political rights; they were burdened with special taxes; they were forced to live in certain quarters of the cities or special villages—like the famous ghetto, which existed in Rome until some decades ago; they were forced to wear distinctive visible signs, the typical nose as a characteristic feature was not enough; they were not allowed to marry Christians, and were thus forced to reproduce themselves, at least officially, within their own race; Christians were prohibited under penalty from using a Jewish physician; Christian midwives were not allowed to lend assistance to Jewish women in childbirth. For reasons of state the Jews were stigmatized in such ways as outcasts and haunted ones from all sides. These restrictions basically existed, for instance in Prussia, until 1812. Then, in the wake of the defeats of 1806 and the new era following these events, a new decree was passed, admitting the Jews to middle-class occupations, to teaching positions, to the military services with eligibility for promotion, to farming, and permitting them to purchase land. Despite the fact that this decree was law, the actual situation remained the same for the Jews during the following decades. As late as 1833, the provincial diets of the former Prussian provinces unanimously agreed, on the basis of their expertise, that, regarding the effects of the 1812 decree, a basic change in the relationship between Jews and the rest of the population had not occurred; and at the same time they advocated for an abolishment of these new liberties and the reintroduction of the old restrictions, particularly the prohibition of peddling, of keeping Christian domestic servants, of acquiring real estate, and of holding honorary

offices. In addition the profession of pharmacist was to be prohibited and the keeping of restaurants and saloons was to be allowed only in relation to their own coreligionists. From 1812 to 1833 no Jew acted as representative of the municipal council of the capital, Berlin, a situation that—as we all know—today's anti-Semites consider their professed ideal. Not until 1848 were there major improvements for the Jews concerning their social and political situation. The fact that Jews were prominently engaged in all new reforms and in the Revolution, can easily be explained through their position in state and society as a subjugated and oppressed race. Shortly after the victory of the reaction, again steps were taken against the Jews, namely in 1851, in the Prussian Upper Chamber. A motion was made to eliminate article 12 of the constitution, guaranteeing religious freedom and the privilege of civic rights to the Jews and all non-Christians. They were not to be allowed to become members of the Representative Assemblies and were to be excluded from judicial and all other offices invested with executive power. These were to be reserved for members of the officially accepted Christian churches. This motion was made and dealt with at a time when the official leader of the upper chamber, Stahl, was a Jew himself; he had himself baptized! The motion failed, however, and by the new legislation, according to the formulation of the North German Confederation concerning the German Empire, the last civic restrictions on the Jews were repealed. Legislation of a thousand years against the Jews and their constant restriction not having achieved what they were intended to achieve, should be proof for the enemies of the Jews that their aspirations are not feasible, even if they should come to power some day, which is not at all likely.

During the first years of the German Empire, no anti-Semitic tendencies of significance were noticeable. This movement made its first public appearance only in 1877, when Stöcker in Berlin set himself up as their spokesman and was the first to organize them, which he still is particularly proud of today. This phenomenon, however, was the natural effect and the consequence of the economic situation in Germany as a result of the great collapse of 1873. The latter had brought about a general depression. The newly founded industrial mammoth enterprises and their production were in fierce competition with the craftsmen; now for the first time, the feeling of decline befell the members of the petit bourgeois and middle-class trades- and craftsmen. The golden era of prosperity of the early

seventies, the greatest we ever had, will never come back, because all of its preconditions have irrevocably disappeared. After the middle classes had run into such a critical economic situation and had become aware of it, they naturally started exploring the reason for it. Now it is clearly undisputable that the Jews—and I keep referring here merely to the majority of them—after receiving full emancipation and as a result of the new economic and social legislation of the North German Confederation and the German Empire, opening new, hitherto unimagined avenues of capitalist development—ranked first among those engaging in trade and being financially powerful during this development. In addition, the Jew is in many cases superior to the Christian in his ways of trading. Undoubtedly, what has become known as haggling is particularly typical for some of the Jews. The Jew knows how to calculate and, if need be, he contents himself even with the smallest of profits; besides, he trades in a host of items, which to others seem worthless or plain, maybe even disdainful. By engaging in this kind of haggling themselves or through the earlier efforts of their immediate ancestors, many Jewish capital magnates created the foundation of their present position. As a result of all of these circumstances in combination with the tribal particularities of the Jews mentioned above, it was foremost among tradesmen that anti-Semitism first fell on fertile ground; their hatred was directed against the Jew as competitor.

Indeed, Jewry has become the decisive factor in a large number of business branches. It leads in the retailing of manufactured goods in the most general sense; it completely dominates the trading of all kinds of agrarian products in large parts of Germany, such as in Hesse-Nassau, Baden, Württemberg, North Bavaria, Alsace-Lorraine, Thuringia, etc. Recently a comrade in the *Vorwärts* remarked very correctly in an article on the origins of anti-Semitism that, for the farmer, capitalist and Jew were identical terms. Now that the overall economic development was forced the farmers into recession and brought them to the insight that despite all great promises made by the political parties throughout the decades, their material circumstances keep deteriorating, that they are irretrievably lost if help does not come soon, they readily embrace those telling them, "Get rid of the Jew and a period of well-being will start anew!" The anti-Semitic demagogues operate by this simple recipe. Naturally, the small farmer, petty craftsman, or trader does not feel like perishing in this struggle, and he sees his savior in the one who holds out a

straw in his misery. What makes agitation in these circles so difficult for us is the fact that as honest people we have to tell them: Within the framework of present society, we have no remedy to save you for good. Therefore, we will draw only a few sympathizers from these strata in the beginning, even though comrade Katzenstein's assertion is wrong, claiming that we have no single real farmer in our party. But we cannot entice them with promises that we know are unfeasible. This is, however, what the anti-Semites are doing. If we were to follow their example, we would degrade ourselves to demagogues of the basest kind. These are the main reasons why anti-Semitism took root with the farmers.

A farmer selling his products today—potatoes, grain, hops, tobacco, wine—who are the buyers? Jews. Who lends him the capital, who buys and sells his cattle? Jews. Anti-Semitic tendencies consequently have to surface as a result. Like the farmer, the small business likewise suffers from the tremendous capitalistic development sweeping over Germany since 1871, comparable only to the development in North America. This development has long reached a point where capital competes with itself, with the big capitalist putting to death and devouring the medium-sized and small ones. The protective duty specifically intended to protect the crafts and the farmers extraordinarily promoted big industry during these past fifteen years. Our class of capitalists, comprising of a few tens of thousands of people, certainly retain about 2000 millions of extra marks each year, which are invested in new enterprises. And now the Jew also starts competing in the industrial sector. Industrial shoemaking, tailoring, the trade in clothing, old and new, cloth mills, etc., are all more or less in the hands of Jews. The Jew, who as a wholesaler employs a great number of artisans, who as a wholesale capitalist, as an exploiter, appears in this sector as well, must necessarily provoke anti-Semitism among his competitors. And whenever an anti-Semitic agitator approaches the circles of artisans and farmers, shouting, "Get rid of the Jew and your situation will be different!" they will believe him. Our small businessmen, our rural folks, whose ideals are directed towards the ways of the past, fall for such promises. In their desire to be saved at any rate they blindly follow the anti-Semites' call, saying: Just be on our side, vote for us, then you will certainly be helped. Indeed, if there is anybody who impertinently and impudently makes promises to the voters, it is the anti-Semitic agitators. A social democrat could not dare do such a

thing: his own party comrades would make a clean sweep and out he goes off the assembly.

Furthermore, we can see that the state and the communities award large contracts for all kinds of orders. Who alone can supply cheaply, fast, and in large quantities, who is able to buy raw materials cheaply because he has loads of capital at hand? Often enough it is only Jews! Naturally the orders are entrusted to them. Now, if they start bringing down the artisans, as is only natural, the latter's feelings of hatred and enmity will not boil over against the capitalist, but against the Jew.

Anti-Semitism found sympathizers in the circles of the trading classes basically for the same reasons as with the farmers and small businesses. But anti-Semitism is more far-reaching. Large segments of our civil servants are anti-Semites. A considerable part of them are forced into debt, due to their bad salaries and because of the demand made on them to act in so-called keeping with their social standing, and they are forced to go into debt with the usurer, the cutthroat; he cannot furnish secure guarantees, because as a rule he does not own any property. According to the economic principle that a greater risk ought to be parallel with a greater profit—a theory that not a Jew, but a middle-class economist postulated, and which was taught with enthusiasm in Germany by Schulze-Delitzsch—the interest rates are high; they are usurious interests. But the majority of usurers are Jews again. The Jews are falsely accused of being cowards. No one risks more than the Jew; hoping for a higher profit, he persistently engages in such business deals. Among the ranks of the indebted civil servants anti-Semitism naturally takes root as well. Besides, sailing under the flag of anti-Semitism, the civil servants may eventually oppose something actively. It is a kind of opposition allowed by the state, which otherwise is not possible for civil servants. They are allowed to show up at conservative or anti-Semitic meetings only, and nowhere else. And since the first are terribly boring as a rule, while the anti-Semites kick up a racket and cause excitement, he [the civil servant] prefers the latter; besides, there they do not have to strain themselves displaying loyalty and royalism. Due to similar causes, anti-Semitism is to be found in the circle of officers and the feudal aristocracy. Our Junkers have fallen prey to the usurers partly because of their prodigality, partly because of their social standing, forcing them to meet expenses beyond their means. First of all the Jew lends money, then he acts as the buyer of

the manors, often he becomes the owner himself and in doing so multiplies the reasons why the feudal aristocracy is in the anti-Semitic camp. This does not prevent the aristocrat of exquisitely noble birth, however, from catching a Jewish goldfish to save his shaky existence and regild his coat of arms.

Another element is anti-Semitic and even influential in the movement: these are the students. The great majority of them is anti-Semitic today. They, too, are anti-Semites for material reasons, even though this may seem improbable at first sight. It is they who are annoyed with the Jews most. Today competition also plays a great role among the circles of scholars, those circles with higher education. Already in the first edition of my book *The Woman* I pointed out that today we are suffering from a surplus of goods, similarly from one of intellectuals. Our small businessmen, our midsize farmers often don't even consider letting their sons become artisans or farmers anymore. They know that this leads nowhere, feeling that they have problems maintaining their own livelihood. With all of their remaining resources, they see to it that their sons may study, in order to obtain a position with the state, to make a career as a civil servant, or to make a livelihood as physicians or jurists, or to find a permanent position for life as architects, chemists, engineers, etc., with a state-owned or industrial company. But a surplus of employees prevails in all of these fields, due to an enormous influx, causing a dramatic disproportion with the demand. While the middle-class sons felt a dislike for the clerical profession during the time of the *Kulturkampf**—causing a noticeable shortage of clergymen—a new interest in studying theology has arisen again, characteristically, “obeying the laws of necessity, rather than one's own inclinations,” now that all other fields of study are crammed and as a result all clerical positions have been filled again. With the Jews' affluence and prosperity and with their undeniable aspirations for higher education, they send their sons to the universities in great numbers and they study law, medicine, etc. Our “Germanic” students consider them very undesirable, unpleasant competition. The generally known fact that Jews distinguish themselves by extraordinary resilience, toughness, and often by sobriety, too, turns their opponents against them even more. As a rule the Christian artisan or retailer feels that he did not have a good day unless he spent at

*Conflict between the State and the Roman Catholic church under Bismarck.

least a couple of hours over his morning pint. A Jew will not even dream of such a thing. The Jew stays home at his business. Concerning the consumption of alcohol, he can even be considered the ideal of our teetotalers. The Jewish student spends most of his time studying diligently while he is at the university; the “Germanic” student loafes around the bars, the fencing loft, and in other places I would rather not name. The Jews are diligent, they study and often they outdo their Germanic fellow students during exams. If only the latter would work and study as diligently as the Jews do on average, the current secretary of cultural affairs, Bosse, would not have had a reason to give a lecture on the study of law and the ignorance prevailing among a larger number of the young jurists, in which he made it rather clear that many of the young jurists were opportunistic thrusters trying to compensate for a lack of knowledge and character with servile behavior.

Thus I have sketched in as short a form as possible the phenomena that—in my opinion—contributed to turn anti-Semitism into the phenomenon the way it presents itself. It is striking how anti-Semitism could gain popularity in Saxonia, of all places, where there are relatively few Jews. Well, it does not really matter whether a Jew lives in close proximity, but whether he makes himself felt as an uncomfortable competitor. But this is the case in Saxonia as well as anywhere else. Moreover, the majority of the Saxonian conservatives are noted for their unusual degree of lack of principles and servility toward their superiors, thus greatly inciting the voters' discontent with their behavior and causing them to join the anti-Semites who set themselves up as helpers and braggarts. Besides, they make seemingly radical demands, which are bound to find approval with any petit bourgeois who has democratic convictions deep down inside. Why, for instance, is it not possible any longer to have a genuine democratic party in Germany? Because artisans and farmers who constituted the main foundation of such a party keep losing power. It was substituted for liberalism, the representative of the bourgeoisie, captivating the majority of the above-mentioned strata. The more difficult the struggle of survival will be for the middle classes of our society in the coming years, the more rapidly they see themselves drifting toward their ruin—and this is going to happen—the more readily they will, let's not deceive ourselves about that, turn to the anti-Semitic movement. With these classes our time will not come, until anti-Semitism has lost its attraction to them and

they have realized through the anti-Semitic representative in the Reichstag and elsewhere that they have been deceived. Then the hour of our harvest will arrive, not earlier. In its struggle for power anti-Semitism will be forced to overshoot its own marks against its own will, as has already been demonstrated in the case of Mr. Ahlwardt, who entered into the battle arm in arm with the Junkers and in the course of time was then forced by the voters' mood to issue the slogan: Against the Jews and the Junkers! For the anti-Semitic movement in Hesse it is not sufficient anymore, either, to agitate against the Jews alone, it has to agitate against capital per se; once this moment has arrived, the time has come also for our views to fall on fertile ground and we will find the followers that we look for in vain right now.

The contradictory nature of anti-Semitism finds expression in its contradictory program, which is partly ultrareactionary and conservative and partly democratic, and concerns some aspects congruent with the demands of our own program.

For instance, the anti-Semites demand a representation of the people based on professional categories, a totally reactionary demand going back to the Middle Ages; but as long as this has not been achieved, they agree to universal suffrage and, naturally, they desire diets, too. At the present point they would vehemently support us in our struggle against the abolition of universal suffrage because this alone renders their presence in the Reichstag possible. Furthermore they would like to introduce censorship against the immoral excesses in the press, in literature and the arts, which would leave the door open to reaction of the worst kind; to maintain the Christian and national character of the school system, obviously a conservative demand. On the other hand, however, they demand educational opportunities at the state's expense for highly talented students without means, which is similar to what we included in our program. Strong military forces for the preservation of peace in the exterior and in the interior. I guess I don't have to tell you against whom the one in the interior is deemed necessary. In addition they demand sliding income and inheritance taxes, which is, by all means, democratic, but then they also demand a defense tax and the retention of the grain duties, by which they hope to win the farmers. Furthermore, demands for a social reorganization of the professional and industrial groups are made—again, a purely medieval demand! Restrictions concerning the freedom of trade, chambers

of handicraft with disciplinary powers, nationalization of the mortgages.

The last-mentioned demand is also made in the *Communist Manifesto* and has been made similarly by our comrades in some German state assembly. Isn't it wonderful that anti-Semites, farmer unionists, and we come forth with seemingly the same demand! But these demands have basically nothing in common with one another. The *Communist Manifesto* demands the nationalization of mortgages with the assumption that a socialist government is already in power. As is generally known, we demand the nationalization of all real estate, and the demand of nationalization of mortgages is made by the *Communist Manifesto* only for a transitional stage. This means, if we cannot expropriate the class of capitalists at once, we are willing to cut off the dog's tail piecemeal (*Laughter*), by ruining capital gradually through the reduction of the interest rate. The men who wrote the *Communist Manifesto* knew very well that this demand had basically little significance, but might find the approval of many and it may be necessary during a transitional period. But when the nationalization of mortgages is suggested to a bourgeois government, to a powerful class of big landowners and agrarians, so the gentlemen agrarians will have to pay lower interest rates, then it is a through-and-through conservative measure even if social democrats make this demand; it means favoring one class at the expense of the majority, at the expense of the working class. If the state were to provide a cheaper interest rate on mortgages, not only the small farmer would benefit from that, but the big landowners as well. If the state's interest rates were as high as 3 percent, while the state would have to pay 3½ percent just to borrow money, then the ½ percent of interest for billions in mortgage payments would have to be raised from tax sources; the burden would have to be carried by the great masses and not the capitalists. It is, therefore, dubious to suggest such a wrong remedy, out of sheer zeal for practical actions. I can only warn those comrades who will become members of the Assemblies to agitate in their zeal among circles who at present are not to be won anyway and in part cannot be won at all, thus cooperating in the artificial upkeep of social conditions, on whose upkeep we least of all are supposed to cooperate. I do not consider the Independents' verdict, speaking of our party's decay, justified, but we have to keep our eyes open.

Further demands in the anti-Semitic program—restriction of ped-

dling, prohibiting bazaars, and advertising, etc.—are nothing but an interesting proof of the anti-Semites' demagoguery. During the elections for the Representative Assembly in Saxony, for instance, one of theirs thunders against the Jewish exploiters, yelling that no Christian must buy from a Jew; but when he takes off his coat in the assembly, one of our comrades recognizes the label of a Jewish company on it! I was told that the person in question was so much in debt that none of his fellow Christians was any longer willing to lend him money. Furthermore, the program includes the demands of restricting consumers' cooperatives, the establishment of penal colonies overseas, the promotion of internal colonialization. I guess I don't have to elaborate on who are supposed to be the first for shipment to these penal colonies. Finally, demands are made to abolish Jewish emancipation and to put them under laws, treating them as resident aliens. According to experience made during the Middle Ages, nobody will get very far with that; because, in relation to the admonition, Be fertile and multiply like the sand on the sea! the Jews have always strictly adhered to their fathers' commandments and are still doing so today.

In short, this hodgepodge of a program totally corresponds with the contradictory nature of anti-Semitism. What I told you concerning the probability, even the necessity of its spreading, will lead to its becoming revolutionary against its own will, which is when we have to employ social democracy.

Translated by Renate Steinchen

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION FOR THE MASSES

Joseph Dietzgen

Scientific Socialism

A considerable number of readers of the *Volksstaat* are opposed to elaborate and searching essays in these columns. I doubted therefore whether the following would be suitable for publication. Let the editor decide. Yet I beg to consider whether it is not as valuable to engage the more advanced minds and to gain qualified thoroughgoing comrades as to strive for great numbers by publishing popular articles. Both these aims, I think, should be kept in view. If the party is really of opinion that the emancipation from misery cannot be accomplished by mending particular evils but by a fundamental revolution of society; it necessarily follows that an agitation on the surface is inadequate and that it is moreover our duty to undertake an enquiry into the very basis of social life. Let us now proceed:

Contemporary socialism is communistic. Socialism and communism are now so near each other that there is hardly any difference between them. In the past they differed from each other as does liberalism from democracy, the latter being in both cases the consistent and radical application of the former. From all other political theories communistic socialism is distinguished by its principle that the people can only be free when they free themselves from poverty, when their struggle for freedom is fought out on the social, i.e., on the economic field. There is this difference between the modern and the older socialistic and communistic theories: in the past it was the feeling, the unconscious rebellion, against the unjust distribution of wealth, which constituted the basis of socialism; today it is based on knowledge, on the clear recognition of our historic development. In the past socialists and communists were able only to find out the deficiencies and evils of existing society. Their schemes for social